

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for producing 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid comprising (a) oxidizing quinoline or 8-hydroxyquinoline in a solvent in the presence of copper (II) ions to precipitate copper (II) salt of 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid and then ~~separate~~ separating the precipitates, (b) reacting the separated copper (II) salt with an alkali in a solvent to obtain a solution of an alkali metal salt of 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid, and (c) reacting the solution of the alkali metal salt with a mineral acid to precipitate 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid and then ~~separate~~ separating the precipitates,

~~characterized in that~~ wherein part or all of the solution obtained after the precipitated 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid is separated in step (c) is used as at least part of the solvent in step (a) or (b).

Claim 2 (currently amended): A process for producing 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid comprising (a) oxidizing quinoline or 8-hydroxyquinoline in a solvent in the presence of copper (II) ions to precipitate copper (II) salt of 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid and then ~~separate~~ separating the precipitates, (b) reacting the separated copper (II) salt with an alkali in a solvent to obtain a solution of an alkali metal salt of 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid, and (c) reacting the solution of the alkali metal salt with a mineral acid to precipitate 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid and then ~~separate~~ separating the precipitates,

~~characterized in that~~ wherein copper or a copper compound is added to the solution obtained after the precipitated 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid is separated in step (c) to recover the 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid remaining in the solution as its copper (II) salt.

Claim 3 (original): The process of claim 2, wherein the recovered copper (II) salt is recirculated to step (b).

Claim 4 (original): The process of claim 1, wherein the oxidation in step (a) is carried out by oxidizing quinoline or 8-hydroxyquinoline with a chlorate as an oxidizing agent under acidic conditions.

Claim 5 (original): The process of claim 2, wherein the oxidation in step (a) is carried out by oxidizing quinoline or 8-hydroxyquinoline with a chlorate as an oxidizing agent under acidic conditions.

Claim 6 (original): The process of claim 1, wherein the solution of an alkali metal salt of 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid obtained in step (b) is purified, prior to treatment in step (c), by adding at least one substance selected from sulfides, hydrosulfides, polysulfides, and sulfur and removing the resulting precipitates.

Claim 7 (original): The process of claim 2, wherein the solution of an alkali metal salt of 2,3-pyridinedicarboxylic acid obtained in step (b) is purified, prior to treatment in step (c), by adding at least one substance selected from sulfides, hydrosulfides, polysulfides, and sulfur and removing the resulting precipitates.

Claim 8 (original): The process of claim 1, wherein the solvent is water in each reaction of steps (a) and (b).

Claim 9 (original): The process of claim 2, wherein the solvent is water in each reaction of steps (a) and (b).